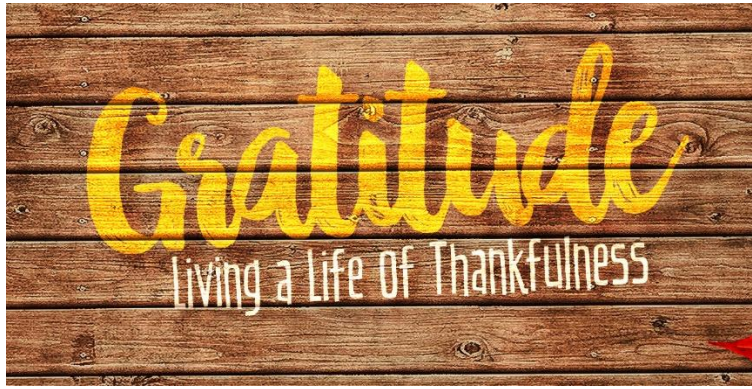




Message 1

ONE RARE TRAIT

God knows that humans can be forgetful. He also knows that nations commonly repeat the same mistakes throughout history for one primary reason – they forget the lessons from their past. God knew that if He did not set future practices in place to help the Israelites remember their deliverance from Egypt, they would eventually forget His extravagant act of grace, and this significant event would be lost on His people. Their lack of remembrance would lead to a lack of gratitude, and without gratitude toward the Lord for what He had done, their hearts would grow hard, they would forget the Lord's salvation, and they would once again end up as slaves. So, when their children would ask, "*why do we practice the Passover?*" God wanted the adults to respond by remembering the Passover with gratitude for their salvation. Although the word *gratitude* is not mentioned, it is implied as part of their salvation's ongoing work. If they wanted to live as a nation of significance and not fall back into a nation of slaves once again, they had to practice remembering God's grace (blessings) in their life. The Passover was more than just a ritual; it was a practice of gratitude. So we ask, how do you/we practice gratitude?

Is it a _____ in _____ occurrence?

Let's take special note of the statements of Jesus from the story in *Luke 17:11-19*:

- "*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*"
- "*Were not all ten cleansed?*"
- "*Where are the other nine?*"
- "*Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?*"
- "*Rise and go; your faith has made you well.*"

1. Thanksgiving is an extension of our _____ in Jesus. *Luke 17:19*

What we see here is a replica of other stories and teachings in the Bible. It is the theology of God's grace, which is accepted through the practice of "*charis, eucharista, eucharisteo*" (giving grace; practice of giving thanks; praising God). The ten lepers fully believe they are healed. They see their healing, they feel their healing, they *believe* they are healed, and they go and show it to the priests. But, instead of showing their belief to Jesus, they show it to others without so much as a thank you. But one leper gets it. He turns back, falls on his knees, confesses his *belief* in Jesus through thanksgiving and praise, and shows Jesus that he has received God's grace. This leper, not only believed that he is healed and received the healing, but by his actions, he believes in *whom* he has been healed. His thanksgiving, his bowing at the feet of Jesus, for his healing was a confession and affirmation of his belief in Jesus.

2. The Absence of Gratitude is an _____ of the Heart! *Romans 1:20-23*

Note some key phrases: “*divine nature is clearly seen...they knew God but neither glorified him, nor gave thanks to him...they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images...*”

We tend to shy away from this word, *atheism*. By definition atheism is *to not believe in God*. However, *to not believe* in something, by its nature implies you actually do believe in something – you believe in not believing. Atheism of the heart is to know of God and to choose *not* to glorify Him as God. It is to accept His grace, his healing, his provision, his goodness in our life, but never acknowledge they come from His hand. In an atheistic heart there is no obligation to show a response for what God has freely given. There may be a belief in a God who freely gives, there may be an acceptance of His gifts, but there is no expressive response to His gifts. Is the “forgetting” or the seldom expression of gratitude more forgivable than the one who has clear intent to not acknowledge God?

3. The Heart Condition Produces an _____ Lifestyle. *Romans 1:24-32*

Few passages expound on an atheistic heart like this passage in Romans, written to the early Roman church by the Apostle Paul. How did their atheistic lives mimic their atheistic hearts? They did not honor Him or give thanks. They chose not to receive and respond to God’s grace. Therefore, they exchanged God’s grace for backward lives, full of sin, and pain. **An atheistic life trades an attitude of gratitude for a me, mine, and myself mindset.** Living a life without gratitude, is to choose not to practice our faith and become a petri dish for sin.

Compare this list in Romans 1 with the teachings of the Apostle in *Galatians 5:16-25*. Where does crucifying the passions and desires of the flesh begin? With a response of gratitude to God for his mercies. And from this place of gratitude, we find a strength to choose God above ourselves, a distaste for things not of God, and a desire for His gifts in our life (the fruits of the Spirit).